

From: Kat Daley
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/16/02 1:11am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I must comment on the Microsoft antitrust settlement. Microsoft has been the big stupid bully in the software game for far too long, stealing younger kids' lunch money and making them do its homework. And so far Microsoft's settlement offers are analogous to the bully saying, "Well, I wouldn't beat them up if they'd just fork it over. . . ."

I have been programming computers since 1977, when I was 12 and my father obtained a computer from a small firm in California. It used an operating system so similar to MS-DOS that I could switch with no difficulty to an MS-DOS computer years later. In fact, I could detect NO difference, which calls Microsoft's claim to "innovation" into question from the start.

I have also observed that small programs created by small companies to do nice little innovative things have been stolen repeatedly by Microsoft, which only disgorged licensing fees after strenuous legal battles.

I have been forced to use Microsoft products for many years. In EVERY product, I have run up against faults which should have kept the product from being released. Instead, Microsoft has released these products and has created an environment in which program crashes and operating system errors are normal when they should be hideous exceptions.

When I have used Microsoft's programming libraries, I have consistently run up against bugs which are simply unacceptable in a professionally made product. When system resources are gobbled up by a program and never released properly, it is the most basic of programming errors. No professional programmer should ever release a product which does this, since it will inevitably cause the computer's operating system to crash -- especially one as delicate as Windows. Yet Microsoft has done so consistently.

In fact, I believe Microsoft has cost this country untold billions in code faults alone. Every programmer I have ever known has spent hours or days tracking or fixing bugs which would not be there if Microsoft's products performed as advertised. Every person I've worked with who has used Microsoft's products has a harrowing crash story to tell. Every computer I've ever used has crashed many times for no apparent reason while I was running Microsoft's applications.

In the interests of programmers everywhere, Microsoft must be forced to play nice instead of stomping all over the young smart companies with good ideas. At the very least, Microsoft must be forced to release all methods by which an application may communicate with the hardware of a computer through the operating system at least six months prior to operating system release. If

Microsoft fails to comply, the operating system can not be sold to the public. And since Microsoft would undoubtedly give away the operating system free in that case if they thought they could make more money releasing Microsoft Office, NO APPLICATION utilizing the new operating system could be sold either. That is the VERY LEAST remedy which *might* level the playing field sufficiently to restore competition.

I'd really like to see Microsoft divided into an operating system company and an applications company, but the Justice Department has ruled against that. I'd like to see all of Microsoft's actions vetted by the Justice Department to keep them from harassing small companies with frivolous lawsuits and giving advantages to retailers who play their noncompetitive games. I'd like all of Microsoft's "intellectual property" declared public domain because that's where Microsoft stole it from in the first place.

Until Microsoft gets more than a "bad boy" slap on the wrist, the USA will continue to lose untold billions to software inefficiency. Hackers-- and terrorists, I'm sure -- will continue to find easy access to most of the nation's computers. And I and many other programmers will stop programming from sheer frustration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Daley
Former programmer

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Version: 6.0.307 / Virus Database: 168 - Release Date: 12/11/01